

# USACE Special Emphasis Program Managers Guide

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This guide is written to aid the USACE Special Emphasis Program Managers in implementing a viable program. The purpose is to assist SEP Managers, Managers/Supervisors and Commanders in fulfilling their EEO program

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs) were established as part of the overall affirmative action program. Within the context of the EEO program and the Federal Merit System, the programs emphasize the enhancement of employment and advancement opportunities for minorities, women and persons with disabilities. Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs), therefore are responsible for the concerns of represented groups in the areas of employment and advancement. Ultimate responsibility for the programs is vested in commanders and top management officials. However, SEPMs are responsible for providing advice and assistance to management officials who have program responsibility for, or interest in, employment and advancement matters. There is a defined line of authority and an established framework for carrying out their responsibilities.

SEPMs are expected to be advisors to both management and the workforce. To be effective in that role, they should have an understanding of mission requirements, EEO

and civilian personnel process. Contacts with community organizations whose interests are compatible with EEO goals should be initiated and maintained.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Federal Government nondiscrimination programs began in the 1940's and prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, or national origin. In 1961, President Kennedy appointed a Commission on the Status of Women. It made a number of recommendations including a prohibition of sex discrimination in employment. In 1963, the Civil Service Commission recommended a Federal Women's Program. When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed, Title VII of the Act prohibited sex discrimination for the first time. The law, however, did not apply to employment within the Federal government. In order to equate Federal EEO programs with those in the private sector, President Johnson issued Executive Order 11375 in 1967, thereby adding sex and religion to the prohibited forms of discrimination in the Federal government.

In January 1968, the Civil Service Commission created the Federal Women's Program (FWP) in order to reinforce the President's order and to give additional emphasis to issues of sex discrimination in the Federal sector. The FWP was later fully integrated in to the mainstream EEO program although special emphasis on women's issues was still provided. In 1979, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a handbook for FWP managers. OPM retained responsibility for the FWP when it transferred other EEO authorities to the EEOC in 1978.

The Hispanic Employment Program (HEP) was created during the civil rights movements of the 60's, much attention was paid to issues of racial discrimination. Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited race, color, religion, sex, and national origin, a disproportionate amount of media and public attention focused on race discrimination. In order to counter the mis-impression of a single focus and in order to recognize the legitimate concerns of national origin discrimination, President Nixon created a sixteen-point program to assist Spanish-speaking persons obtain Federal sector employment in November 1970. The Civil Service did not implement the President's program until January 1973. Additional guidance was provided in 1974 in the form of a letter of instruction. In 1974, the Commission issued a Guidebook for Spanish-Speaking Program Coordinators and in 1978 changed the program name to Hispanic Employment Program. OPM retained responsibility for this program when it transferred generic EEO responsibilities to the EEOC in 1978.

In addition to the SEP's controlled by OPM, Change 2 to DOD Directive 1440.1, "The DOD Civilian Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, issued on March 11, 1991, requires DOD components to establish three additional SEP's: Black Employment Program (BEP), the Asian/Pacific Islander Employment Program (AEP) and the American Indian/Alaskan Native Employment Program (AIEP). These programs are to be established at the headquarters level and all fields activities unless an exemption has been granted by the Agency head or designee.

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## **SELECTION**

Each SEP is a management program; therefore, the SEPM is part of the total management team. They assist commanders, managers, and supervisors in the implementation of a viable program to promote equal opportunity. There should be an established procedure for selecting collateral duty managers to ensure that the selectee has the knowledge and skill necessary for the position.

Criteria. Individuals selected should understand the causes and effects of discrimination, have good managerial and organizational skills, be familiar with the principles of personnel management and be able to identify and work toward the solution of problems which effect the hiring, advancement, training, treatment and recognition of employees. To ensure that the above qualifications are met employees selected will normally be at GS-7 and above.

Employees who receive EEO collateral assignments should possess the following:

- ❖ General knowledge of statutes, laws, and directive regulations governing EEO in the Federal Government.
- ❖ Good understanding of organization mission and personnel management practices.
- ❖ Empathy for and understanding of the different work-related concerns of minorities and women; sensitiveness to the needs and problems of older employees and persons with disabilities.
- ❖ Accessibility to the work force.
- ❖ Personal commitment and demonstrated good judgment and ingenuity.
- ❖ Ability to analyze statistical data and make necessary recommendations.
- ❖ Ability to identify barriers, which impede the employment and advancement of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities, and recommendations.
- ❖ Effective communication with top management officials, community organizations leaders and employees

Documentation. Collateral SEPM duties will be documented in the incumbent's official position description and coded as part of the employees current position. A sample position description of collateral duties is at Appendix.

## **TRAINING**

Formal training for newly appointed SEPMs must be taken within six months of appointment. The training can be provided through formal classroom instruction and on-the job exposure. Both the EEO officer and the immediate supervisor should participate in developing the training plan and insuring all the requirements are met. The Army Civilian Training and Education plan for Career Program 28 which outlines the training for collateral duty SEPM's is located at <http://cpol.army.mil/training>.

The primary training mandatory for newly appointed SEPM's is the EEO Special Emphasis Program Managers course, held at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), Patrick Air Force Base FL. This course is a one-week course held in Florida twice a year. DEOMI also offers a non-resident SEPM course which is conducted at a sponsoring organization. The sponsoring organization requests DEOMI to send a training team to their location.

The DA EEO Counselor Course is another required course for the SEPM. This course will provide the SEPM an overview of the EEO program. This training is normally conducted locally by EEO Office staffs.

USDA Graduate School SEPM workshop is source of training. This three- day course is conducted at various locations throughout the United States. Additionally, Department of the Army (DA) provides a training session in conjunction with the national training conferences of Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) in May, National IMAGE in May, Federally Employed Women (FE' in July and Blacks in Government (BIG) in August. Additional recommended training offered by OPM includes Briefing Techniques, Techniques of Negotiating, and Statistics for Managers.

The SEPM should review the EEO laws and regulations and understand the mission of the organization. The SEPM must become fully aware of existing policies, programs and organizations objectives.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The mission of SEP is to strive toward achieving a civilian workforce in which women and minorities are employed at all levels, in all occupations, and in all segments of the organization commensurate with their representation in the relevant labor force and integrate the goals and objectives of each SEP into all aspects of civilian personnel management. The goals of all SEP's is to establish and implement procedures, which will enable activities to:

- a. Identify and resolve actual and perceived system inequities, which adversely affect employees
- b. Identify and resolve underrepresentation and under-utilization of minorities and women.

Within this framework, some of the specific activities include:

- ❖ Identify barriers to the hiring, development and advancement of minorities and women for the Affirmative Employment Program.
- ❖ Develop and implement special program initiatives that will enhance the employment and advancement of their particular group.
- ❖ Identify ways to ensure equal consideration for promotions, training, and awards and monitoring separation and disciplinary actions to ensure that they are given in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- ❖ Conduct career counseling and encouraging participating in self- development and continuing education.

- ❖ Keep commanders and key personnel aware of program goals, objectives and accomplishments.
- ❖ Perform liaison between recruiters and organizations which can assist in recruitment efforts and activities.
- ❖ Developing and maintaining positive working relationships with community, professional and national organizations, college and universities.
- ❖ Publicizing program goals and objectives and successful initiatives.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a SEP manager, you must know and understand the mission of the organization. This includes being aware of the existing policies, programs, and organizational objectives. Managing a special emphasis program is a three-step process, which includes planning, implementation and evaluation.

### **Planning**

The initial step in planning is assessing the program. This assessment looks at the organization as it actually is or in its present condition. A comparison is made with the relevant civilian labor force to determine where the organization needs to be. After the comparison is made, barrier(s) should be identified which hinder or keep the organization from where it should be. The last step is formulation of the plan of action or work plan that specifically identifies your goals and objectives. The goals and objectives should be geared to the problems identified in the assessment process. Included in the plan should be the estimated time and resources needed to implement the objectives. Priorities and target dates should be set to accomplish the action items. An annual budget should be developed that supports the plan. The plan and budget should be discussed with the EEO officer prior to submitting a final copy.

### **Implementation**

This step involves putting into action the items in the plan. In addition to implementing the action items in the work plan, the manager should do the following:

- ❖ Develop and maintain a network with other program managers.
- ❖ Develop and maintain rapport with community organizations.
- ❖ Publicize the program within the agency
- ❖ Meet regularly with management officials to discuss SEP issues, concerns, and accomplishments. Present well-documented facts and data and avoid emotional appeals.
- ❖ Assist the HR office and other agency officials in implementing external and internal recruiting programs
- ❖ Respond to inquiries from employees, agency officials and the public. = Maintain contact with (women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians or American Indians) and other interested employees in the agency.

- ❖ Keep and adequate system of records, files and reports

### Evaluation

The SEP Manager on a continuing basis monitors progress, evaluate the implementation of the program and reassess the status of the organization. The EEO Officer and management should receive periodic and end-of- the-year assessment reports.

### **COMMITTEES**

Many activities have found it helpful to establish SEP committees to support the manager and goals of the EEO program. Committees can be a valuable resource and represent the pulse of the organization. The SEP committee provides an opportunity for more people to become involved and to make a personal commitment and contribution to the program. The SEPM is the technical advisor of the committee. Committee members will serve as organizational liaisons to provide information about the concerns and needs of the employees in their respective organizations.

The committee should be representative of the workforce; i.e. organization, occupation and grades. The focus of the committee should be to work on issues and concerns not to advise; The members must promote the program for everyone. Committee participation is a valuable developmental experience for members and it brings out unrecognized talents and abilities.

The committee must be established officially by appropriate documentation and have detailed objectives. Meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis and conducted according to established agenda. Minutes of the meetings should be maintained for the record.

### **APPENDIX I**

#### **ADDENDUM TO POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR COLLATERAL DUTY SPECIAL EMPHASIS PROGRAM MANAGERS**

Serves as the Manager of the (Federal Women's, Black Employment, Hispanic Employment, Asian American Pacific Islander Employment, or American Indian/Alaska Native Employment) Program. Make necessary recommendations to assure that (women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians or American Indians) have full and fair opportunity to compete for employment within the Federal Government. Also participates in the development and/or review of all policies and programs in order to advise management relative to their impact on women and minorities.

The manager:

- ❖ Plans, directs, implements, and monitors the (Federal Women's, Black Employment, Hispanic Employment, Asian American Pacific Islander Employment, or American Indian/Alaska Native Employment) program. Advises the installation EEO manager, the Commanders, and other managers and supervisors affecting the promotion, development, training and recruitment of (women, Black, Hispanic, Asian or American Indian) employees and applicants.

- ❖ Provides training form managers and supervisors concerning their responsibilities in the implementation of the (Federal Women's, Black Employment, Hispanic Employment, Asian American Pacific Islander Employment, or American Indian/Alaska Native Employment) program. Serves as the organization's resource person and principal staff advisor on the unique problems of (women, Black, Hispanic, Asian or American Indian) employees and job applicants.
- ❖ Gives briefings, as appropriate, on problems or trends regarding minorities and women. Plays an active role in the design of the organizations; efforts to recruit more (women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians or American Indians).
- ❖ Assists individual employees (in conjunction with their supervisors and human resource staff) in development of individual development plans to fir their needs.
- ❖ Participates in recruitment planning to develop ways of eliminating underrepresentation of (women, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians or American Indians) in professional, supervisory, and managerial positions and the organization in general.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR THE SEP MANAGER**

- ❖ Become an expert on your program and be familiar with our organization's mission. You will not be taken seriously if you don't relate it to the larger organizational mission.
- ❖ Be informed of the current environments, i.e. downsizing, reorganization, etc. and manage your program based on the command's and current employees' needs.
- ❖ Learn which major occupations and which grades have the fewest minorities and women and why. Know the current local statistics of your particular special emphasis group.
- ❖ Focus your energy and attention on "employment related" activities; prioritize the problems/concerns which have been identified. Concentrate all your efforts on two or three key areas for the short-range goals) fiscal year). Problems requiring additional strategies and resources should become long range goals.
- ❖ Know your chain of command; always coordinate with the appropriate offices; no surprises!
- ❖ Spend as much time with the command's managers (Why? because they select, promote, hire, fire, train, assign, detail, discipline and evaluate the employees).
- ❖ Put everything in writing — training plan, proposed budget, special initiatives, trip reports, after action reports and, program updates. The budget plan is extremely important — be concise and realistic; become familiar with the desired format and preparation.
- ❖ Be a catalyst for change, be flexible, creative and resourceful.
- ❖ Keep your program visible. Publicize commitment and end results: